TRANSCRIPT—Mary and Willis Moore

Fairview Community History Project

Interviewees: Mary and W.M. Moore

Interviewers: Judith Robertson

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Judith Robertson: This is Judith Robertson recording the history of Willis and Mary Moore on January 31, 2019, at the Fairview Library at 11:05 in the morning. This is for the Fairview Oral History Project for the North Carolina Room at Pack Library in the Buncombe County Library System. The conditions of use form for sound and video recordings has been signed by the interviewees.

Tealey Ellis: My name is Tealey Ellis and I'm a volunteer with Fairview, NC, Oral History Project. Today, January 31, 2019, I am interviewing Mary and Willis Moore at the Fairview Library. Thank you, Mary and Willis, for this interview.

We talked a little bit before we started recording about how we would begin with the interview so, it doesn't matter to me which one starts first but if we could talk about where you were born, your parents' names, and if they were born here, if you have grandparent information that you can share as well, that would get us started, and once we get through that background information, then we'll move into your memories and experiences, living in and growing up in Fairview.

Willis Moore: My mother died when I was 3 months old. My aunt took me.

TE: She was your mother?

WM: She was my mama.

TE: So please go ahead, one of you, and start with sharing that information.

WM: The lady that raised me. My mother was a Lee. My father was a Moore. The lady that raised me was Leela Williams (Lillian Moore Williams?). Her son had, what's that?

Mary Moore: He was a hemophiliac.

WM: ...a hemophiliac. Cut his tongue and bled to death when he was two years old. I guess that's the reason she took me in, and she raised me and I was raised with a lot of the people like Hadley Moore, that's my uncle's boys, their mother died too, we got raised together, mama raised all of us. My uncle Sam helped build the Grove Park Inn and some of the places like that and Biltmore house and stuff. I can't remember, did he build, he did build Fairview Church, didn't he?

MM: He built the form for the blocks on Fairview Baptist Church.

WM: He did. He got the idea and the forms to build the blocks for the Biltmore house and haul the sand out of Cane Creek down here and poured the blocks to build Fairview Baptist Church.

TE: When you were a young boy, where did your family live in Fairview, in what area?

WM: On Church Road.

MM: His mother died when he was

WM: Three months old.

MM: Three months old. And that's when Miss Williams took him. And his daddy's name is

WM: Sam.

Mary: And your mama's name was

WM: Victory Lee Moore but anyway I was raised I don't know what the address is. Where Noble Road comes out on Church Road, that house right there was where I was raised.

TE: And is that house still standing?

WM: Still standing. It's over a hundred years old.

MM: Now Miss Williams was a lady who had two kids, her boy died, and her daughter of course lived. She took Willie in, but she had kids that she raised and helped.

WM: They were orphans. I don't know how many she took in and raised.

MM: She had kids in school for fifty years.

WM: I tell you. It was funny at night. We didn't have locks on the doors. Some of the kids come over to the ball games over here. Kids from other areas and communities a little too far to walk and come in and spend the night. That kind of stuff, you know.

TE: How did you get to school?

WM: Used to walk down to the old post office, which is down there at Noble Road. You know where Noble Road and Village Road is right there on the corner. First post office I ever remember is right there. I'd walk down there and catch the bus and ride. Sometimes I'd have to walk too, you know, home, over here.

MM: Miss Williams' husband was dead.

WM: He died.

MM: Most of that time, that she had all those kids.

TE: So, she raised them all herself?

MM: She raised what they ate and clothed them.

WM: She was a seamstress, you know. I was operated on for appendicitis in 1939. She didn't have money to pay them. Dr Lynch used to live up in the straight up there past where you was talking about. He's the guy who operated on me. And the bill was $150. His daughter was getting married, so she worked for him and made his daughter a wedding dress.

TE: I like that. A little bartering going on.

WM: Anyway, that's the way she paid for my doctor bills. She didn't have money. I know the people at Fairview Inn, we showed you there, there'd be people from Florida and all around, coming here in the summertime and spend the summer there at the Fairview Inn and they'd come up to the house when they had some sewing or something needed done. They'd give me a penny. I'd go down to old man Ben Williams' store down there and shop for candy with that penny. I tell you. That was a lot of money back then.

TE: What kind of chores did you have as a young boy?

WM: We had cows. I had to milk them cows before I went to school. We raised a pig every year. Mama would sell the calf. Those cows would pay our property tax. I think it's 7 or 8 dollars. It wasn't much. I started out, I used to work for Miss Lydia Ashworth. The Ashworths were some of the important people here in Fairview. I don't know if you've heard that name or not. They lived in a big home down there just past Fairview Baptist Church on the right. There used to be a big home up there. I'd work for her mowing her lawn. She paid me five cents an hour. It was a push mower. And then I graduated from that and started delivering the Asheville Citizen Times paper. I had a ten-mile route I rode it seven days a week

MM: On a bicycle

WM: ...on a bicycle. I made three dollars a week.

TE: You got a lot of exercise, didn't you?

WM: I sure did. And then from there my folks when they got back from World War II they bought that [ ] store down there, and I went to work for them. I made eight dollars a week. I saved enough money to finish at Cecil Business College. I took their business course out there and I finished out there. And then this Korean War broke out, they was about to draft me, and I joined the Air Force. Because a boy, he was almost a brother to me, he's the guy of course who developed the lake up there, he told me, he was in infantry landing on D-Day, got his landing craft shot out from under him, had to land it at Normandy. He told me if I didn't want to be sleeping in a foxhole I better join the air force. That was the reason I joined the air force.

JR: You mentioned you went to Cecil Business College. Is that in Asheville?

WM: Yes ma'am. Cecil's not out there anymore is it? That's where I went. It was one of the most popular business schools at the time.

TE: What was high school like here in Fairview? You went to Fairview High School?

WM: Yes, I did. I went to Fairview School.

TE: Were you involved in sports? What were some of the activities that you all did?

WM: No, I wasn't, because if I had any money, I had to work for it. I'm sorry. I was a poor boy.

JR: You got your exercise.

WM: Yes, and but it was real, real good. I remember Elisabeth Nesbitt was one of my favorite teachers, she taught the sixth grade. Boy, did she know how to use her paddle. I ain't kidding you, she had one I bet that long, holes in it. I seen her line up six boys and bust their sitters.

JR: Did you ever get paddled?

WM: No never did, no.

TE: Good job, good job there.

WM: She's one of the best teachers around. I really enjoyed that.

TE: As a young man in high school here in Fairview, what kind of social things did you all do?

WM: Well, I belonged to the Beta Club. I was the only guy over there that belonged to the Beta Club. You all ever heard of that? We went down and toured the Camel Cigarette place down in

MM: Reynolds? RJ Reynolds

JR: Winston Salem.

WM: RJ Reynolds, stuff like that. That was the Beta Club. I was the only guy in the Beta Club. I don't know why, but I was.

MM: There was a racetrack in Fairview, did you know that?

TE: I believe that has been mentioned. Tell us about it.

WM: I didn't have money to go to the thing. Me and my friend we rode them bicycles because I delivered the papers. It was up on Hollywood Road. You know you go in from 74, you go in and go over and turn the corner and start up the hill, like going in to Hollywood up there. It was on the left over there. Worth Frady and his wife owned that thing. It was a dirt track. We didn't have money to go, so we'd go out in the woods, walk around in the woods. Come out way back over there and watch that thing. Tell you what kind of crook I was. I couldn't afford the ticket, so that's the way we went.

TE: Do you know what the admission cost was?

WM: I can't remember.

TE: Was it well attended usually?

WM: Oh Lord, yes.

JR: There weren't that many amusements in Fairview.

WM: It was a dirt track by the way.

TE: Was it on a Saturday night or Saturday or something?

WM: Generally, it was on Saturday. Fraser, good friend of mine,

MM: Worth Frady.

WM: Worth Frady, sorry. He was my Sunday School teacher.

MM: But really, his father-in-law owned it, Charlie McBrayer

WM: He, his father-in-law bought all that land, they had kind of a little auction on the Garren Creek Road up there so he went and they auctioned the place off, and they told him, he bid and got it, and they said well, you can't buy that, you ain't got no money**.**

MM: He went in overalls, he was carrying a sack.

WM: Carrying a sack. Money in that sack to buy that property with

MM: They said you can't because you don't have the money, and he had the money in the sack to pay cash.

JR: And that was for the land where he built the racetrack.

WM and Mm: All of that land in there.

JR: And what did they race on the racetrack?

WM: Just cars. That's all. I remember Richard Petty being up there and a lot of the old timers like that.

TE: About how many cars would be in a race? I know it probably varied from time to time.

WM: It would. I'd say ten or twelve cars, something like that you know.

TE: I bet that was some wild sounds on a Saturday night.

WM: You could hear it, I'll tell you.

TE: What other places did you and the high school students hang out? Where did you go to have fun?

WM: We used to ride up on Hickory Nut Gap on bicycles. We'd ride up to the top of the mountain up there. We'd hook on behind a tractor trailer. And them drivers would be getting mad at us. They'd run us off. We'd hold onto that thing to the top of the hill and we wouldn't have to pedal.

TE: I was wondering how you'd get up that hill.

WM: We'd ride down the mountain, race them cars down and pass automobiles and all kind of stuff on bicycles. Dangerous stuff.

TE: What year did you graduate from high school.

WM: 1949. I started at Fairview. They used to have first grade over there at Fairview Church, Fairview Baptist Church is next door over there. My birthday's in October. They made me quit. I had to go back next year, because I wasn't quite six years old.

TE: Had to meet that deadline.

WM: Anyway, that's where I went, started over there at that school, first grade at Fairview School. By the way she didn't mention it, but there was a school up on Old Fort Road up there.

TE: What was it called?

WM: What was the name of that school, Mary, you remember?

MM: Wasn't that Black Knob?

WM: I guess it was, Black Knob school. It was right, you know where Whitaker Road comes out on Old Fort Road, in the curve coming up Whitaker Road, in that last curve about a thousand feet before you get to Old Fort Road, that old house on the right, still standing there, people living there now, but that used to be Black Knob School.

TE: There's a lot of old structures around here, that's for sure, still standing.

WM: Yep**.**

What did you, when you graduated from high school, what did your graduating class do on that night? Did you have a party?

WM: We had a graduation, but there's 18 of us was all that graduated. We had a get together at the gymnasium. Kind of had a dinner I guess you would call that. That's what we done.

TE: That sounds like it would have been fun for sure. Mary, your early history of Fairview, when you came here. You said you were actually born in Asheville.

MM: Well, yeah, at the hospital.

TE: At the hospital.

MM: My mama and daddy always lived at the end of Garren Creek Road. It's called Flat Creek.

TE: I misunderstood then. Share with us some of your experiences and early life and years in Fairview.

MM: See we didn't come to Fairview a whole lot. We always connected with the people on Broad River. So, mine is more that a way than this way. Even though I went to Fairview School.

TE: OK, and how did you get to school. Was there a bus?

MM: Yes, there was a bus. There was several buses that came—well, at that time there was only one bus that would go through and pick you up and you'd come to Fairview. If you got at Fairview school, if that was the school you was at, you got off. If it was Reynolds, you got on another bus and they took you to Reynolds.

TE: OK. What were your memories of Fairview School.

MM: Just a school.

TE: Just a school?

MM: Yeah, I mean, you know.

TE: You never got paddled, did you?

MM: Oh, no, my mama and daddy would've beat me to death, I wouldn't've been here today.

WM: That was the thing back in them days. I tell you right now, you got a paddling there, you'd get one at home, too.

MM: That's what we were told in my family when we started in school in first grade. You behaved and do what the teacher tells you and if you get a paddling at school, you get a paddling at home. You know, kind of a country thing maybe at that time.

WM: I didn't tell you, I don't think, but I was in the Korean War. From '50 to about, they let me out 6 months early, after the war was over. And anyway, I was in the Air Force.

TE: That's OK. As things pop up in our minds, just share them and if it's not exactly the area we're talking about, that's OK, too.

WM: You know, I graduated from Cecil Business College and when I went in, they made me a career guidance counselor, that's what I done. I made Staff Sergeant in eighteen months, by the way.

TE: Where was that college located?

WM: Up in the town of Asheville. You know where Pritchard Park is, the street runs up to that, what's the name of that building you know up where they have all that entertainment and stuff

MM: Civic Center?

WM: The civic center, it was up there on the left. You go on up there. It was between Pritchard Park and the civic center.

TE: How did you get there?

WM: I'd have to think about that now. I might have borrowed a car and drove, I don't know how I got there, I'll be honest with you. That's where I went to school, though. I finished there.

TE: When did you get your first car?

WM: First car I ever owned was when I was in the service. Had a 1939 Ford.

TE: What color was it?

WM: I think it was black, yeah.

TE: And how much did you pay for it?

WM: I don't know, but I tell you, when I come out of the service, I went to Detroit. I couldn't find a job here, you know. And I worked at a steel mill up there and I worked in the office at the steel mill. And I bought a new Plymouth. You know how much it was? 1500 dollars for a new one.

TE: And what year would this have been roughly?

WM: The last of '53.

TE: And it was $1500 for a brand-new car.

WM: $1500. And you know I was working for the steel mill in the office up there on a salary, and they paid me $800 a month. Can you believe that?

JR: That was a lot of money.

TE: That was.

WM: That was.

TE: That was a lot of money.

WM: I come back here, I decided I needed to come back here to go to college, go to Asheville-Biltmore College. That's when I worked a little bit for the dairies

MM: Skyland Dairies

WM: Skyland Dairies I worked a couple of months for them. I drove a truck for them and then I left there and went to work for CP Clare. I was the eighth employee they hired. I started out 95 cents an hour. That's a whole lot different from 800 a month, wasn't it. But anyway, I went to school. That was when I started going to Asheville-Biltmore College.

JR: What did you study there?

WM: Just general studies. A little of everything. Engineering and all kinds of stuff, you know. I don't think, I don't remember being particular set on any one subject but I covered a lot of them. I did drawing and stuff like that, you know.

TE: How long did you work at CP Clare?

WM: 20 years.

TE: Do you remember how much you were making an hour by the time you left there?

WM: Yeah, I was making $16,000 a year. Brunswick Corporation tried to hire me, and they gave me a $6000 a year raise. So, I went with them, up in Marion, Virginia.

JR: Now what did they do?

WM: They made pool tables and pinball machines and stuff like that. And I worked up there in the.... They were unionized and they had a strike up there and they sent me down to the warehouse to fill in because the striking employees didn't work there. They had to have somebody work down there in the warehouse. I worked down there for about three months in the wintertime and I like to froze to death and I finally told the boss man it was about time he sent somebody else down there. And he wouldn't do it, he had a fit in the office, he did the same thing I did. AVX hired me in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. About every job I got, I got a 10-12% raise.

TE: That's always good.

WM: And so, I left that one, went down there, and was down in Myrtle Beach about three years, wasn't I, and then Brunswick Corporation, Ingersoll Rand hired me and I went up there as an engineer

JR: Where was that?

WM: Davidson College area

JR: Davidson, North Carolina?

WM: No

MM: It was Davidson

WM: And I worked as an engineer up there and they started this new plant making small compressors and they put me down there. I set up the departments. That's how I met her.

JR: Where does the wife come into your narrative here? Which job were you on?

MM: I worked at CP Clare and he worked at CP Clare.

JR: And so you met there.

MM: Yes.

WM: I set up departments down there and I run into her.

JR: So you were already finished with your service at that time.

WM: Oh, yeah.

And you finished with your school.

WM: Yes, well, you mean college? No.

MM: You had then.

WM: Well, I had then. I just had.

MM: Long time before that.

WM: I set up departments for them. That's what I done. And I run into her, and you don't want me to tell that?

MM: No, I don't.

TE: That's okay.

WM: [Laughter] She's a college graduate, working on the production line.

MM: It's being taped, I hope you know that.

WM: Oh, but anyway that's how I met her.

TE: We can ask for things to be taken out

WM: [laughter]

JR: We've heard some funny stories about this kind of thing.

WM: Anyway, I hired her for work as supervisor.

TE: This is for both of you. At some point, Mary, you came to Fairview, so what I'd like for each of you to talk about is, back in the day, back in time, and coming through to where we are now, what has been your best memories of living in Fairview and best aspects

of living in Fairview, because it certainly has changed, so I'd like to hear about those changes and how you felt about them and how you feel about them now. And it doesn't matter who starts.

WM: Well, I lived, you know the home across the road from Village Road over there, that brick home across the street on 74-A? I built that home, by the way. And then we built the home up at the lake. I've had it for a while, before we were married, I had that home when she married me, and then I started work up in Virginia working around, she went there.

But what kind of changes have you seen in Fairview, from high school years, because that's when you're more or less an adult person, and you have more memories as compared to each decade past to where we are now, what kind of changes have you seen in Fairview?

WM: You got all these stores like you got here, you got a bank out here now you didn't have then, and that kind of thing. The first big store that we had was down there at the Cane Creek Road and 74. That store across the street over there?

MM: Fairview Supplies.

WM: Everett Ledbetter was the guy started that.

Dickie's, now, isn't that correct?

WM: Dickie's.

How do you feel about the changes that you've seen happening and taking place in Fairview?

WM: Well, I guess it's good. People are developing everywhere, you know. Fairview is a place where people come to live, rather than business-type things. I remember when I was a kid , we only had one guy that had a car, and he lived at the end of Whitaker Road and 74, that old

house over there and I used to be working in the garden with mama. We didn't raise, we didn't have it to eat. That's more or less how it was back in them days. And I'd hear that car coming and I'd run out there and watch him go by.

MM: At the end of Whitaker Road and Old Fort Road.

WM: That's what I'm saying.

MM: You said 74.

WM: Yeah, I'm sorry.

MM: We want to make sure

WM: You all have to pardon me. You get to my age

MM: You was talking about me. I grew up on what they call Flat Creek at the end of Garren Creek Road and I grew up in a community where there was a lot of caring for one another. We cared for my grandpa and grandma and my other grandfather lived with us for 24 years. When I was 4 years old he come to live with us. So, growing up caring for people has always been part of my life. And that's the way it was in that community. If somebody went to the hospital and their hay needed cutting, the people would just go cut the hay, put it in the barn, go back home, nothing was ever said. That's the way, and you're talking about change, I don't see that today. I don't see people caring about each other as much as they used to.

JR: Do you think that's because they don't know each other as well perhaps?

MM: I think it's because they don't know each other as well and because they're so busy and I think we live in a society today, it's all about me, it's not what I can do for you but it's what I need.

JR: That's a point

WM: Her brother owns that Daystar Engineering down on Cane Creek, I don't know if you know where that is

MM: And I've seen a lot of changes when you talk about that. And when you talk about the people in this community and stuff, one thing that I can remember them talking about was when an uncle died of ours, and he was going to be buried up at the old Sharon church and they always dug the graves. The men got together and dug the graves, and they run into a tree stump where they were digging that grave, and they dug that grave all night long, chipping away to get it dug. And the community I grew up in, I mean for years, I'm talking about when everybody else was using tractors to dig a grave? No. The men in the community felt like it was their place, their honor, to go and dig the grave. And they would go dig the grave. And they would be there to fill in the grave.

WM: I done that some myself.

MM: When it was over with.

JR: I have a question about where you lived because your husband has said he lived on property his family owned and I presume it was all relatives who lived around you, not strangers, was that true for you also? Did you live on family property with family all around?

MM: Yes, my daddy's family was there. Mama's family was on Broad River, which is five miles away maybe, three miles away or something. But it was my daddy's family owned that property or he bought it, whatever, and that's where we lived at. And when I say I grew up on a farm, I grew up on a farm. We had 7000 chickens that I fed and stuff, and we had cows and all of this kind of stuff. My daddy done truck farming, he worked at Beacon.

JR: In Swannanoa?

MM: In Swannanoa for 38 years

TE: What was Beacon? I'm not familiar

MM: Beacon was a place that made blankets. Their motto was "Beacon makes warm friends."

TE: I like that. I like that one a lot.

MM: And he worked second shift, so that he could truck farm and stuff like that to provide. Because my grandfather, like I said, lived with us, one of them. My mama's daddy lived with us. His mama and daddy lived just outside of our house, kind of round the mountainside where you couldn't see it. And my grandfather had had a stroke, so he couldn't work. And my daddy and his brothers provided for them, and cut wood and everything like that. And like I was saying, they believed in helping and stuff. And one year they didn't get enough wood cut for my grandpa and grandma and it was cold, and my daddy and his brother would put coal on their back and walk up to their house, kept doing that until they got enough stuff up there to keep them warm. I mean, that's the top thing.

TE: That's pretty amazing.

JR: A lot of loyalty to family, wasn't there?

MM: Yes, in that community, people were kind of kin to one another. There was a lot of Nesbitts, that's the reason there's Nesbitt chapel, and there were Lytles, I was a Lytle before I married, there were Lytles married into the Nesbitt family, and so if you wasn't kin to them, somebody in your family was kin to them.

WM By the way, my uncle Henry Garren, his dad was the one that named Garren Creek.

TE: OK, that's good to know. I've thought about a lot of these roads and how they get their names. It's very different and interesting. Every community usually in the past

has had one or more people who's considered the character of a community, it might be a storyteller or somebody who is always telling funny stories and things of that nature, tall tales. Do either of you recall anybody like that in your earlier days?

WM: I know that store down there, that store had a big heater in there, and there'd be a lot of community guys come down on Saturday evening and shoot the breeze, tell tales and stuff like that, one of the guys used to come down was Paul Miller, he lived down across from the school, was where he lived, he's dead and gone.

MM: [to interviewer] That's Paul—the one you're thinking of, his daddy.

TE: Because we interviewed a Paul Miller

MM: Paul and Callie

TE: Paul and Callie.

WM: It was his daddy. We all went to church together down there in Fairview. By the way, I remember when they used to, people didn't have cars, when they come to church in Fairview, they drove their horses and wagons down.

TE: Had hitching posts. So Mr. Miller was a storyteller?

WM: He'd come down and shoot the breeze on Saturday evenings, he, I think he's a plumber, is what he did.

TE: Do you think any of those stories were true, or was he just a really good storyteller?

WM: He was just telling tales, you know.

TE: Those were always fun. What about you, Mary? You remember

MM: In the area where I grew up, everybody worked. But the one person that stands out in my mind was a guy by the name of Ross Nesbitt, he lived across from us, there was a big field

in between where I grew up and his house, and you would hear him late in the afternoon, sit on the porch, and you would hear him sing. He would sing.

JR: That's nice. That's wonderful.

TE: Any favorites? Was it gospel?

MM: Yes, you know, hymns.

TE : Oh, that must have been nice. I figure that would be terrific just to go out and be able to hear that.

MM: But he would sit out there and just sing.

TE: Did he ever sing at church?

MM: Yes, he was choir director. Well, if there was a choir, he was the song leader. I think that's what they called him.

TE: Who were, in the earlier days of Fairview, who were some of the people that were considered the leaders of the community?

WM: Guy Merrell, he owned the store right there at the corner of Village Road and 74. My house was across the road. By the way, the Fairview Fire Department, it started in that rock building right there at the school. You know the one on the right there? And we started the fire department in the basement down there, dirt floors. That's where the fire department started.

TE: How long did it take to get the Fire Department organized?

WM: I'd say it's four or five years. We auctioned off cars and stuff like that, I say auctioned, we sold tickets to raise money,

JR: Raffled

WM: Raffled, we'd go to various shopping centers, sell tickets, raise enough money, that's how they got the new place down there at Fairview.

JR: Do you recall when the original fire department started down in the basement?

WM: Let me think about it a little bit.

TE: That's OK. And you have pictures.

MM and WM:

Yes

WM: In fact, the first fire that I fought, I worked at CP Clare, by the way, and they let us off to fight the fires. I remember the first one was over on Garren Creek at this guy's house and we didn't have fallout gear and we didn't have money to buy it and I had a nylon shirt on, melted the sleeves, I'll never forget that.

JR: Got pretty burned up, didn't you?

WM: Yeah

TE: Now when you were at work at CP Clare and you got called out on a fire, you said they allowed you to go, for that time that you missed working were you paid.

WM: Yeah

OK. I was hoping so.

WM: Didn't take any money away. Of course, I wasn't making big money, you know, what was I making, $36 a week?

TE: But still, though, that was money coming in. What made Guy Merrell a leader, do you think?

WM: He was a politician, mainly, I think it what he was.

TE: Did he hold an office of any kind?

WM: No. He just run that store.

JR: You didn't have a mayor or anything.

WM: No. He run that store. That's what he done for a living.

MM: Trailway buses used to come and stop. Guy Merrell's store was one stop that they stopped at.

JR: And they took people to Asheville for shopping?

MM: or took them to Charlotte. The bus went all the way through to Charlotte.

JR That's why the call this the Charlotte Highway, I guess.

WM: That's right

JR: OK. Over the mountain. Must have been a ride.

TE: Must have been a long ride.

WM: I'd say it was. Queen City Trailways, that's the name of it.

You said that Merrell's store was one of the stops. Do you know where any of the other stops were?

MM: I think that was the only one in Fairview.

WM: Well, you could stop on the road, if you were standing out on the road, you'd stop them.

JR: We've had other people says they took a Trailways bus to Asheville to shop on Saturdays. They'd go early and stay until they couldn't move and come home on the last bus.

WM: Yep.

MM: So, I guess that's shop till you drop?

JR: Yes. Is that what you and your mother did?

MM: No, my daddy always took us.

JR: He had a car?

MM: He had a truck, and he took us.

TE: What was the church community like back in your younger days here? Was there a lot of churches, were churches well attended, over all?

WM: Let's see back in them days, I'd say you had Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, where Nesbitt's Chapel was, wasn't it? And you had Emmas Grove, down there on Emmas Grove Road.

TE: Do you recall the churches holding any kind of maybe seasonal celebrations or anything?

WM: Used to have, Frank Reed used to teach music, teach you how to sing hymns, teach you how to read

MM: The music

WM: The music. You go ahead, honey.

MM: Where I grew up, Nesbitt Chapel was the big church in that area. And of course, they had vacation Bible schools, they had revivals, and things like that. They had what is called homecoming, where people would, if you had moved out of the community, you always come back for homecoming, and they still have it. And if you've got anybody that was buried in the cemetery, you decorated the graves and that is still a tradition that goes on today. And the cemetery is decorated on that particular day and there's a special service.

TE: When I was a kid growing up in Kentucky, one of the churches used to have an event that they called pie suppers, and they were raising funds for the church, and so women, young girls, women, brought pies, and a guy, sometimes it would have been your husband or boyfriend, would buy your pie, and that's who you ate with, so I was wondering, was there anything like that that any of the churches around here did?

WM: I don't remember that, no

TE: Maybe it was unique to that area then.

MM: One thing I can say about the churches when I grew up, everybody respected the churches. Everybody respected Sunday. I don't care, I've known people, I mean, they was drunkards. They would not drink on Sunday. They might not go to church. But they respected it enough. You didn't hear anybody going out and working in their yard, or anything like that. That didn't happen. And I can remember someone died on Saturday night, and they didn't have much food. And my daddy and somebody else when down on Cane Creek to Dotson's store and begged that guy to open up the store and let them buy food for that family because it was Sunday, and you didn't do things like that.

TE: Everything was closed on Sunday.

MM: Everybody reverenced.

WM: My mama she didn't cook on Sunday, she cooked on Saturday, and that wasn't the thing to do, I don't know if it was that way for you up in Kentucky...

TE: Yes, I remember my grandmothers doing that as well.

WM: You didn't hear about people doing anything on Sunday like that. I don't know what the community would do to a guy if he did that kind of stuff. The store's weren't open, you didn't have stores open on Sunday.

TE: You made enough food on Saturday, biscuits and cornbread and various things, so that you would have that on Sunday so that you could eat. Do you think the churches in the Fairview area are still a force today.

WM: Not like they was when I was coming up, don't you think, do you, Mary?

MM: No

TE: Why do you think that might be?

MM: I think you've got people that do not reverence the church, do not look at the church as it used to be, and like I said, I think it's a me society, they don't want to go to church, they don't have time and

WM: You didn't hear people mowing their lawn on Sunday and stuff like you do today, I'll tell you.

TE: I just read recently where the church, Fairview Methodist, is closing? So, I didn't know if you'd seen that or not. That's why I was asking the question.

MM: Attendance I feel like is going down. I feel like in churches you get people what I call revolving doors. There're in and out. They'll go to this church and then they'll go over to this church.

WM: We go to Trinity down on Concord Road. We enjoy going down there, the young man who is minister down there. We used to go to Fairview Baptist. We was gone all that time, we come back finally, move down to Trinity because we knew him, his dad, he grew up in the church, so we go to Trinity, that's the largest church in Fairview now.

TE: You all remember when 74 was expanded to four lanes?

MM and WM: Oh, yeah.

TE: Tell me about that, memories and what people thought maybe and what you thought about that.

MM: I just thought it was just part of the growth area that you had to have, because it was getting to be so many people here, it was terrible trying to get to town on the two-lane road after a while, and it took them forever to get it done.

TE: So you all saw it as a good thing.

MM: I saw it as a good thing.

WM: Oh, yeah. Yessir it takes forever to get to Asheville home, to go to Asheville, there's so much traffic.

MM: But one thing I remember about Mine Hole Gap that I thought was real funny was everybody that I knew if they got a car, whether it was new or not, the way they tried it out to see if it was a good car, was how fast could you come up to Mine Hole Gap in that car.

Is that after it was paved, or even before it was paved?

MM: No, it was after it was paved. Could you come up, because back when I was growing up, you had gears shifts, could you come up in high gear, all the way up that mountain, if you could you got a good car.

TE: Did either of you try that?

WM: No, I didn't

MM: Oh, I have, in my car, or somebody else's.

JR: I've heard stories about guys taking their cars and putting them in neutral and going all the way down to East Asheville.

WM: Saving gas.

TE: Did you feel safe in Fairview?

WM: Did I feel safe? Yeah, my mama didn't even have locks on the door.

TE: Much crime that you heard of?

WM: No. People didn't do that kind of thing then.

TE: What about now, do you feel safe?

MM: My doors are locked.

WM: All of them are locked.

MM: It's a lot different today. I mean, where I grew up it was like where Willie was at, we didn't lock the door. Everybody knew everybody and you know, my daddy even left keys in the vehicles.

TE: Oh, wow, you wouldn't do that now, anywhere, actually. Do either of you have any family stories or memories of maybe your parents or grandparents telling you what it was like when he or she was growing up, like a family story of some kind?

MM: The family story of mine that I wish I had talked to my grandparents more about, and of course you have to get old before you realize you should have, was my grandfather, his daddy and mother decided to go to Colorado with her mama and daddy. And they moved to Colorado, and when they got out there, my daddy's grandmother, my grandmother got sick and died, and he had three boys, and the youngest one was like three or four years old, and the oldest one I don't know, probably six maybe eight. And he decided he was coming back here. And he asked the boys, do you want to come with me, the three boys. And, of course, the youngest one, he was so young, he stayed there with his grandparents. And my grandfather and his brother decided to come back with their daddy, and they come back from Colorado on horse and foot, all the way back from Colorado, back here. And I wished I'd have talked to him more about how was that trip, I mean, where did you sleep, what did you eat? How long did it take?

TE: How'd you get out of the weather.

MM: And I wished I had learned more about that. And my grandfather never saw his brother that they left in Colorado after he left him at that age, he never saw him again.

TE: People were a little bit tougher then than they are now. What about you, Mr. Moore, a family story of some kind that has been kind of handed down from somebody in the past?

WM: Can't think of anything right now.

MM: There used to be a lot of bear hunters in this area. Some of his family was in the bear hunting business.

WM: I used to go, too. Pop Carter was in that.

TE: Could you share some of that with us, about the bear hunting?

WM: They'd go out, I can't think of some of the places

MM: It was like Western North Carolina, in that area

WM: In the National Forest they allowed them to hunt, we'd go out there, I remember, we used to walk around, they'd take dogs with them, they'd kill them bears. I never killed one.

JR: Would you stay several days, or a week maybe?

WM: We stayed three or four days generally

JR: Camping out.

WM: Yeah, camping out.

MM: Louis Kirstein was a big one. Clint Moore was a big one that done it.

WM: Brother of mine

MM: And do you remember some of the rest of them? I remember those two.

WM: Pop Carter

MM: Pop Carter

TE: And did you all eat the bear meat?

WM: Yeah, I guess we ate some of it. I never killed any bears. If they give me some, I probably took it home with me. We'd bear hunt out there. It's kind of an enjoyable vacation, that's what we considered it.

TE: Out in the beautiful woods.

WM: It's bad when you get, start to getting my age, you can't remember like you used to.

TE: Do you have any memories of what people's reactions might have been during the Vietnam War, people here in the Fairview area?

WM: I believe we was gone during that time, or was we here?

MM: No that was before I went to college.

WM: Oh, was it? Okay. I guess, the soldiers [ ]

MM: They didn't protest. That was kind of the start of the hippie movement and that wasn't in Fairview

TE: I was just curious, what the reactions might have been at that time, about that war. Why don't you ask that?

JR: We kind of touched on this earlier but do you remember any big community events that people looked forward to from year to year. I'm thinking like the Farmers' Federation annual picnic.

WM: I used to go to all them.

JR: Were you involved with the Farmers' Federation?

WM: Oh, yeah, I knew Mr McClure, I'd been up to his house, I knew Jamie Clarke real well, in fact Jamie was my Sunday School teacher down in Fairview there for a while, he was a Senator I think. Anyway, I worked for the Farmers' Federation, that's when they was over in Asheville.

JR: That was a pretty big event in Fairview, wasn't it?

WM: That was a big thing, people would go to it. A lot of the musicians and stuff, they'd go and in fact, some of the big stars in Nashville, Tennessee, grew up here and went to them, I'm

trying to think of some the other day, guy's name, he got to be very popular in Nashville. We went all over the area, I mean everywhere. If they had a store, they had that Federation picnic, they'd feed them.

TE: I bet that had some good food.

WM: Yeah, they did.

MM: One of the things that just come to my mind that I thought very interesting was kids from Flat Creek come over here to Fairview to school, and they were over here at school, and there came a big snow, and they got stranded over here at the school. And, didn't they take them to the jail?

WM: Yeah, took them over town.

MM: To keep them for the night.

In Asheville?

WM: In Asheville.

MM: There was a time when it got real bad and it got snowed in, and there was people from Flat Creek that got on horses and come over here to get their kids to take them back. And I know my daddy worked at Beacon, and it may have been in the same year, I don't know, that they got to Fairview and could not go up Garren Creek Road, and it's seven miles, and they walked from Fairview, all the way to our house to get to Garren Creek Road and there was some guys that was supposed to go down on Broad River, because that's where they lived, and Daddy insisted on them staying at the house, and sleeping and getting up the next morning, and going home, and warming up. And they said until the day they died that if Daddy had not stopped them, they would have froze to death before they got home. They would never have made it. But walking seven miles in snow.

TE: Double that mileage almost in terms of what it does to your body.

WM: I tell you they couldn't, down here at the curve, on 74 where Miller Road turns left, that was drifted across there and people couldn't get no farther than school, they'd have to walk. I remember that, yeah.

JR: And I guess the businesses shut down like the plant shut down so your daddy didn't have to get up and go to work the next day.

MM: I never remember my daddy missing work because of snow.

WM: I tell you, mama's cow had a little calf, I'll never forget that. And she had a what do you call them cribs?

MM: Bassinette?

WM: The little calf was born, and we carried that calf down there and put it in that bassinette behind the stove.

TE: I'd love to have had a picture of that.

WM: I would too.

JR: Did you all have electricity and telephones when you were growing up?

WM: No, 1945 was when we got power. We had an outhouse.

JR: When did you get a telephone?

WM: Somewhere along the same time. It was a community phone. There'd be seven or eight people on.

TE: I remember party lines. Everyone listens to what you had to say.

WM: We never got a bathroom in the house till after World War II. Electricity, we didn't have that.

JR: How about you?

MM: I grew up with electricity. I was one of the fortunate ones, because when I was born, my daddy was one of the first ones that got electricity in the house, and he was one of the first ones that got a bathroom in the house. We had an outhouse, but we also had the inside.

JRL You were very fortunate. And you had the phone also?

MM: No, it was a long time. My grandparents got a phone a long time before we did, a long time.

JR: We heard other people say the phone was really important in keeping up with the people.

TE: Are there any topics of interest, anything you wanted to share with us that we haven't mentioned today? Please feel free to share it.

WM: Nothing I know of.

Thank you so much.

END OF INTERVIEW

Philip Blocklyn, 6 April 2020